

## Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958(AFSPA), Insurgency in North-East India, Naga insurgency, Peace Initiatives in North East

### Syllabus – General Studies (Paper 2nd ) INTERNAL SECURITY

#### Why in news?

The Prime Minister of India while addressing a 'Peace, Unity and Development' rally in Assam's Karbi Anglong district announced earlier this year that the Government intends to withdraw the much-dreaded Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958(AFSPA), completely from the north-east.

#### Background behind AFSPA

- The roots of AFSPA can be **traced to British Rule** during the freedom movement.
- The British government had promulgated the **Armed Forces Special Powers Ordinance to suppress the Quit India movement in August 1942.**
- Over the years various ordinances were promulgated for various reasons which include "Assam disturbed areas (1947)", "Assam Disturbed Areas Act of (1955)" etc.
- The Act was **replaced by the AFSPA** for wider application. A similar Act **specific to Jammu and Kashmir** was enacted in 1990.

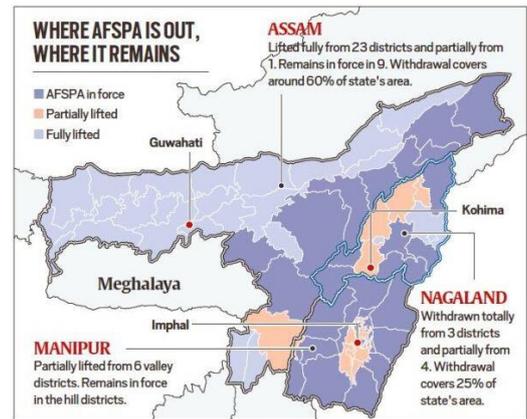
#### About AFSPA

- AFSPA gives **sweeping powers to the armed forces.**
  - For example, it allows them to **open fire, even causing death, against any person in contravention to the law or carrying arms and ammunition.**
  - Also, it gives them powers to **arrest individuals without warrants**, on the basis of "**reasonable suspicion**", and **search premises without warrants.**
- It can be imposed by the Centre or the Governor of a state, on the state or parts of it, after these areas are declared "**disturbed**" **under Section 3.**
  - The Act was amended in 1972 and the powers to **declare an area as "disturbed"** were conferred concurrently **upon the Central government along with the States.**
  - Currently, the Union Home Ministry issues periodic "**disturbed area**" notification to **extend AFSPA only for Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.**
  - The notification for Manipur and Assam is issued by the State governments.
  - **Tripura revoked the Act in 2015 and Meghalaya was under AFSPA for 27 years, until it was revoked by the MHA from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.**

#### Criticism

- It provides absolute powers to the security personnel without being accounted for.
  - This leads to various atrocities and human rights violations by security agencies.
- Critics say the undemocratic act **has failed to contain terrorism and restore normalcy in disturbed areas**, as the number of **armed groups** has gone up after the act was established.
  - Many even hold it responsible for the spiralling violence in areas it is in force.

- The Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee was set up in 2005 to review Afspa and make recommendations.
  - It recommended that Afspa should be **repealed** and the **Unlawful Activities Protection Act strengthened to fight militancy**.
- It has been a controversial one, with human rights groups opposing it as being aggressive.
- Terming the AFSPA as a "draconian law", renowned human rights activist Irom Chanu Sharmila of Manipur had fought for 16 long years till mid-2016, demanding its repeal.

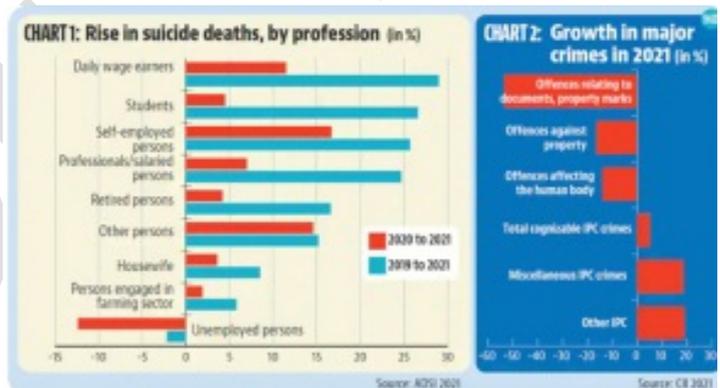


### Way Forward

- **AFSPA is required to counter insurgencies and lack of development in the Northeast region is also a major reason for the insurgency** therefore the Government should take urgent **steps to create new opportunities for growth and development**.

## DEATHS BY SUICIDE AT THEIR HIGHEST RATE IN 2021, SHOWS NATIONAL CRIME RECORDS BUREAU (NCRB) DATA

According to the 'Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India' report 2021, by the NCRB India saw 120 deaths per million population in 2021 the highest level ever recorded. The report highlights the toll the pandemic appears to have taken on the emotional well-being of Indians. This report provides age-group-wise and sex-wise details of accidental deaths, traffic accidents and suicides including farmer's suicides which is a crucial matter in India. The NCRB also release 2 other annual flagship reports: Crime in India: Information on



cognizable crimes as reported in police stations, police casualties, police firing, police & civilians' casualties. Prison Statistics India: Data like numbers and available capacity of different types of jails, strength and training of jail officials and prison budget and expenditure. It is based on the principle of importance of adequacy of prison infrastructure for successful reformation of the prisoners. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) (HQ: New Delhi) It was established in 1986 based on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977) and the modalities worked out by a Task Force (1985). NCRB also looks after the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS), Central Finger Print Bureau etc.

## PRADHAN MANTRI JAN DHAN YOJANA (PMJDY) - NATIONAL MISSION FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION, COMPLETES EIGHT YEARS Launched in 2014 under the Ministry of Finance

Under the scheme, a basic savings bank deposit (BSBD) account can be opened in any bank branch or Business Correspondent (Bank Mitra) outlet, by persons not having any other account. The basic financial services under the scheme include Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner. The concerns over Russia and China cooperation in the

Arctic were raised during the visit of NATO secretary to the military base in Cold Lake, Alberta. In 2014, Russia created a new Arctic Command and it has opened hundreds of new and former Soviet-era Arctic military sites, including airfields and deep-water ports. In 2018, China declared itself a 'Near-Arctic State' with interest in shipping, research and exploration projects in the Arctic to exploit regions' oil, gas, minerals etc. China has also shown interest to build Polar Silk Road, i.e. Arctic shipping routes connecting North America, East Asia, and Western Europe through the Arctic Circle. About Arctic It is the northernmost region of the Earth, representing the area within the Arctic Circle- a line of latitude at 66.5° north of the Equator. It includes the territory of the US, Russia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, all of which are part of the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council was established in 1996 through the Ottawa Declaration by the Eight Arctic States. India is part of Arctic Council Observers as a non-Arctic State.

**Achievements under the scheme Financial penetration:** More than 46.25 crore beneficiaries banked since inception, and 67% Jan Dhan accounts in rural and semi-urban areas. Women empowerment: 56% Jan-Dhan account holders are women. Direct benefit transfer (DBT): About 5.4 crore PMJDY account holders received DBT from the Government under various schemes in June, 2022.

### **Key changes introduced from 2018**

Focus shift from 'Every Household' to Every Unbanked Adult'. Free accidental insurance cover on RuPay cards increased from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh for PMJDY accounts opened after 28.8.2018. Coverage of Overdraft facilities enhanced coverage from 60 to 65 years.

### **What is Financial Inclusion?**

- **Financial inclusion** is defined as the process of **ensuring access to financial services and timely and adequate credit where needed by vulnerable groups** such as weaker sections and low-income groups at an affordable cost.



- In a diverse country like India, financial inclusion is a critical part of the development process. Since independence, the **combined efforts of successive governments, regulatory institutions, and civil society have helped in increasing the financial-inclusion net** in the country.
- Being able to have access to a transaction account is a **first step toward broader financial inclusion since a transaction account allows people to store money, and send and receive payments.**
  - A transaction account serves as a **gateway to other financial services.**

What are the Other Initiatives to Increase Financial Inclusion in India?

- **Digital Identity (Aadhaar)**
- **National Centre for Financial Education (NCFE)**
- **Centre for Financial Literacy (CFL) Project**
- **Expansion of financial services in Rural and Semi-Urban Areas**
- **Promotion of Digital Payments**

### **Way Forward**

- There must be an endeavour to **ensure coverage of PMJDY account holders under micro insurance schemes.**
  - Eligible PMJDY accountholders will be sought to be covered under PMJJBY and PMSBY. Banks have already been communicated about the same.
- Promotion of digital payments including RuPay debit card usage amongst PMJDY accountholders through creation of acceptance infrastructure across India.
- Improving access of PMJDY account holders to **Micro-credit and micro investment such as flexi-recurring deposit etc.**

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